

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

January 27, 2009

The Honorable Hillary Clinton  
Secretary of State  
2201 C St NW Ste 7276  
Washington DC 20520

Dear Secretary Clinton:

Congratulations again on your appointment as Secretary of State. We are eager to work with you on the fate of ethno-religious minorities in Iraq and the geopolitical effects of these dwindling communities.

*"The Christian owner of a car repair shop was killed execution-style in Mosul, police said Saturday, raising concern about the possibility of new attacks against the religious minority in the northern Iraqi city."*

This chilling excerpt came from an AP story last week. The targeted violence comes on the heels of attacks and intimidation last fall which prompted thousands of Iraqi Christians to flee their homes in fear.

This is not the first time we have seen targeted killings. We need look no further than the 2008 kidnap and murder of Archbishop Rahho of Mosul, an Assyrian Christian of the Chaldean Church, or Youssef Adel, an Assyrian Christian priest who was also fatally shot in a drive-by attack in April 2008. These high-profile killings are indicative of wider-scale persecution experienced by this suffering community. The numbers tell the story.

Last Congress we started the Religious Minorities in the Middle East Caucus to specifically address this issue and the broader concerns that face religious minorities there. We were successful in garnering development funding for communities in the Nineveh Plains, wrote countless letters urging the State Department to address this growing humanitarian crisis, and also introduced a resolution to bring awareness to this issue.

According to the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), Iraq's Christian population has fallen from as many as 1.4 million in 2003 to between 500,000 and 700,000 at present.

USCIRF also reports that "while Christians and other religious minorities represented only approximately 3 percent of the pre-2003 Iraqi population, they constitute approximately 15 and 20 percent of registered Iraqi refugees in Jordan and Syria, respectively, and Christians

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account for 35 and 64 percent, respectively, of all registered Iraqi refugees in Lebanon and Turkey.”

Last September then Senator Obama wrote to Secretary Rice urging her to address the refugee crisis, the lack of governmental representation, and the intolerance of free religious expression.


Among your first actions as Secretary, we urge you to facilitate the development of a comprehensive policy to address the unique plight of Iraq’s struggling ethno-religious minorities, specifically the Christian community. Further, we ask, consistent with the recommendations of USCIRF, that you appoint a special envoy for human rights in Iraq to our Embassy in Baghdad, reporting directly to you to serve as the lead human rights official in Iraq for the United States.

What we are witnessing is the tragic extinction of an age-old faith community. This week, two Iraqi bishops in Rome for their five-year meeting with the Pope, lamented the “deafening silence” in the international community about the plight of their community.

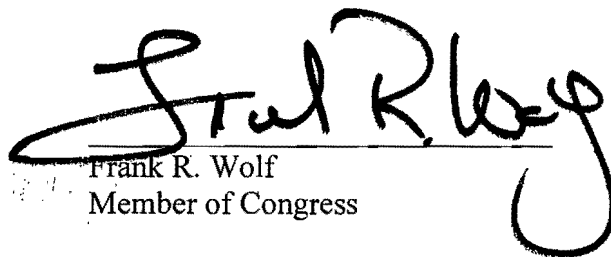
Indeed our silence is deafening. The time to act is now.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,



Anna G. Eshoo  
Member of Congress



Frank R. Wolf  
Member of Congress

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